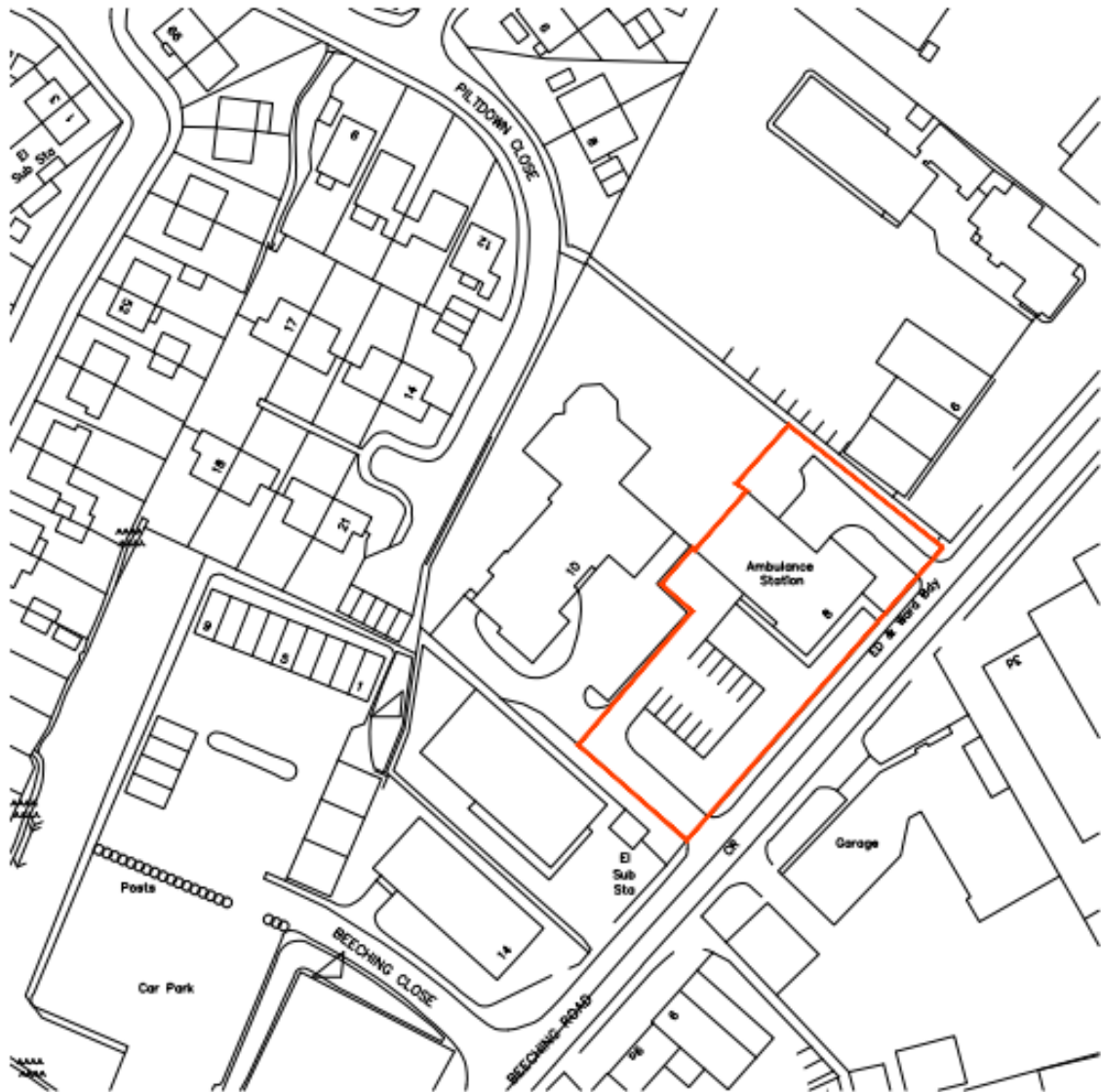


SITE PLAN

BEXHILL

RR/2023/1710/P

8 Beeching Road,
Bexhill.



Rother District Council

Report to	-	Planning Committee
Date	-	12 October 2023
Report of the	-	Director – Place and Climate Change
Subject	-	Application RR/2023/1710/P
Address	-	8 Beeching Road, Bexhill
Proposal	-	Installation of a railway carriage and associated access platform and toilet to function as an arts community cafe, and installation of a sculpture (part retrospective).

[View application/correspondence](#)

RECOMMENDATION: It be **RESOLVED** to **GRANT FULL PLANNING**

Director: Ben Hook

Applicant: Cathedral Group Limited
Agent: Stagg Architects Limited
Case Officer: Miss Katie Edwards
(Email: katie.edwards@rother.gov.uk)

Parish: BEXHILL KEWHURST
Ward Members: Councillors B.J. Drayson and A.P. Hayward

Reason for Committee consideration: Landowner is Rother District Council

Statutory 8-week date: 9 October 2023
Extension of time agreed to: 26 October 2023

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This proposal for a café, contained within a train carriage, with access and a sculpture (already on site), would not cause harm to the local area, neighbouring dwellings, or road safety. As such it is recommended for approval.

2.0 SITE

2.1 The application site relates to land within the old ambulance station, more recently given permission to be used as an artisan blacksmith, artist studios and office space. The site is within the development boundary for Bexhill as outlined in the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan and is part of the Beeching Road Industrial Estate, where the majority of buildings have industrial or commercial uses. To the rear of the site is Hastings and Rother

Day Support Service run by East Sussex County Council which is between the site and the closest residential properties in Piltdown Close.

3.0 PROPOSAL

- 3.1 This application seeks planning permission for the siting of a train carriage on tracks to be used as a café with seating area. There would be an accessible ramp and staircase leading to the carriage and an accessible WC within a timber shed at ground level.
- 3.2 The works would be situated on the grass verge to the western side of the car park so would not result in a loss of parking spaces. There are 12 parking spaces to be retained.
- 3.3 The café would have the following hours of operation:
- Monday to Friday = 7:00 – 22:00
 - Saturday = 8:00 – 20:00
 - Sunday and Bank Holiday = 9:00 – 18:00
- 3.4 The café would have one full-time worker and two part-time workers. They would sell both hot and cold food and drinks.
- 3.5 The carriage would be painted by local artists and would be re-painted every couple of years. The timber WC building would also be painted by a local artist. The decking would be a non-slip timber left to a natural finish and the balustrading would be steel painted dark green. This would be constructed by the resident blacksmith.
- 3.6 Additionally proposed is the retention of a sculpture to the east of the main building, titled “Excalibur 7.62” and adjacent the roadside.
- 3.7 This application is part retrospective meaning the works have already begun. In this case the train carriage has been positioned on a track and the sculpture has been put in place.
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4.0 HISTORY

- 4.1 RR/2021/1464/P Change of use from former sui generis ambulance station to a flexible use comprising artisan blacksmith, artists' studios and office space – APPROVED CONDITIONAL
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5.0 POLICIES

- 5.1 The following policies of the [Rother Local Plan Core Strategy 2014](#) are relevant to the proposal:
- BX1: Overall Strategy for Bexhill
 - OSS4: General Development Considerations
 - EC3: Existing Employment Sites
 - EN3: Design Quality
 - CO1: Community Facilities and Services

- 5.2 The following policies of the [Development and Site Allocations Local Plan](#) are relevant to the proposal:
- DCO1: Retention of Site of Social or Economic Value
 - DEC3: Existing Employment Sites and Premises
 - DEN1: Maintaining Landscape Character
 - DEN7: Environmental Pollution
 - DIM2: Development Boundaries
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Policy Guidance are also material considerations.
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6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 [ESCC Minerals and waste](#) – **NO COMMENTS RECEIVED**
- 6.2 [Planning Notice](#) – **NO COMMENTS RECEIVED**
- 6.3 [Bexhill-on-Sea Town Council](#) – **NO COMMENTS RECEIVED**
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7.0 APPRAISAL

7.1 [Principle of Development](#)

- 7.1.1 The site is within the development boundary for Bexhill where new development is acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other policy considerations to ensure there would be no adverse impact.
- 7.1.2 Policy BX1 provides support for economic growth within the town and states that the overall strategy for Bexhill is to “promote the economic growth of the town, and wider area, including through encouraging growth in new and established local firms, especially in high value-added sectors, prioritising development for employment purposes, increasing the supply of land and premises and promoting efficient infrastructure.”
- 7.1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework also gives support for local businesses to expand and states at paragraph 81 that “planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach taken should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future.”
- 7.1.4 Beeching Road is part of an industrial estate in Bexhill to the northwest of the primary shopping area. A new café use of part of this land would provide a new service in this area for use by the local arts studio and other business employees and wider community. The use is considered appropriate for the location and would be considered to make a positive contribution to the economy of Bexhill and as such the principle of development is considered to be acceptable, subject to other considerations below.

7.2 Design: Layout, Appearance and Landscaping

- 7.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2021) Chapter 12 'Achieving well-designed places' sets out the expectation regarding Good Design. Paragraph 126 states that "the creation of high-quality, beautiful, and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities."
- 7.2.2 Policy EN3 (Design Quality) of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy requires that "new development...contributes positively to the character of the site and surroundings, including taking opportunities to improve areas of poor visual character or with poor townscape qualities." It sets out eight Key Design Principles which will be consolidated with those of the National Planning Policy Framework to review the design resolution of the application.
- 7.2.3 Policy OSS4 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy requires that all development should (iii) respect and does not detract from the character and appearance of the locality.
- 7.2.4 Policy BX1 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy states that the strategy for Bexhill is to (i) conserve and enhance the town's distinct and independent character.
- 7.2.5 Both the train carriage and the WC building would be painted with abstract art by local artists, tying them together. The road is an industrial area where there is no clear character and many of the businesses here have construction vehicles or cars for sale parked at the roadside and have metal cladded walls. As such there is a strong industrial appearance. Whilst the train carriage and the abstract art would be a new addition to the road, it is not considered to harm the character of the locality. It could be considered to inject some colour and life into the local scene. A condition could be secured to ensure that the carriage is well maintained so as not to degrade the appearance of the road.
- 7.2.6 The proposed sculpture is considered to be minor in terms of its impact on the street scene and while quite large, its scale is not harmful in relation to the neighbouring larger commercial buildings. As it is retrospective it can be observed that it does not negatively harm the character or appearance of the locality.

7.3 Impact on Surrounding Amenity

- 7.3.1 Policy OSS4 (ii) states that all development should not unreasonably harm the amenities of adjoining properties.
- 7.3.2 The site lies within an established industrial area and is not adjoined by any residential properties. The nearest residences are on Piltdown Close to the rear of the site just over 60m away, with the art studios building between the site and these neighbours. The café use would be for sociable day time hours only. It is not considered that the proposed use would have a detrimental harm on the amenities of the neighbouring properties.

7.4 Access, Transportation and Highways Safety

- 7.4.1 Policy TR4 (i) states that proposed developments shall: (i) meet the residual needs of the development for off-street parking having taken into consideration localised circumstances and having full regard to the potential for access by means other than the car, and to any safety, congestion or amenity impacts of a reliance on parking off-site whether on-street or off street.
- 7.4.2 Policy CO6 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy states that a safe physical environment will be facilitated by (ii) ensuring that all development avoids prejudice to road and/or pedestrian safety.
- 7.4.3 There would be no loss of parking spaces for the existing site. The carriage is set back from the roadside by approximately 2.5m so would not harm the visibility exiting the car park. It is considered that the café would encourage sustainable travel from the north of Bexhill into the town shopping centre giving a place to stop on-route for those walking or cycling and would provide a local facility for those working close by who could access the site on foot.
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8.0 **PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The proposed development would not harm the character of the locality, neighbouring dwellings or road safety and would provide a local facility for the surrounding area as well as a local exhibit for local art. As such the application is recommended for approval.
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RECOMMENDATION: GRANT FULL PLANNING

CONDITIONS:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason: In accordance with section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and details:
Site Location Plan 52105-P-01A, dated 27/07/23
Proposed Block Plan, Drawing No. 52105-P-03 dated 27.07.23
Proposed Elevations, Drawing No. 52105-P-60 rev B, dated 26.09.23
Proposed Floor Plan, Drawing No. 52105-P-20 rev B, dated 26.09.23
Proposed Sculpture Elevations, Drawing No. 52105-P-62, dated 11.08.23
Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.
3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be as described within the application, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure that the development is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and to maintain the visual amenities of the area, having

regard to Policies OSS4 (iii) and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policy DEN1 of the adopted Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.

4. Prior to the painting of the train carriage and WC building, details of the proposed design shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the development is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and to maintain the visual amenities of the area, having regard to Policies OSS4 (iii) and EN3 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policy DEN1 of the adopted Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.

5. The external walls of the train carriage and the WC building shall be maintained in a clean and tidy condition that does not impair the visual amenity of the site.

Reason: To preserve the visual amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy OSS4 (iii) and EN3 of the adopted Rother Local Plan Core Strategy and Policy DEN1 of the adopted Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK: In accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 38) and with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, the Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.